

Clinton Mill
93 Clinton Street
Woonsocket
Providence County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-299

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

CLINTON MILL

Location: 93 Clinton Street, Woonsocket, Providence County, Rhode Island.
Geographic Location Code: 38 - 0260 - 007
Latitude: 42° 00' 15" N Longitude: 71° 30' 40" W
(Location approximately 20' north of main facade, 26' west of main entrance stair tower.)

Present Owner: City of Woonsocket.

Present Occupant: Unoccupied. Condemned.

Present Use: Not in use. Building scheduled for demolition.
(Editor's note: building demolished June 1969.)

Statement of Significance: The Clinton Mill is typical of the large stone cotton textile mills of Rhode Island of the mid-19th century. It was built in 1849 and has a unique tower roof dating from the early 1850's. The mill produced sheetings and later, plush. In 1886, it had a spindle capacity of 21,000 and had 512 looms in operation.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: The mill was built by the Clinton Manufacturing Co. in 1849 and they operated it until 1876, when it was taken over by the huge textile firm of B. B. and R. Knight. In October, 1918 the Knight corporation purchased all plant, water rights, etc. which they retained until the Knight firm was dissolved in 1923. The mill then passed into the hands of trustees. It was operated as a textile mill until about 1950 and has since been the locus of a discount store. Severely damaged by fire in the mid-1960's, the building was later acquired by the City of Woonsocket, condemned and scheduled for demolition. The mill was demolished in June, 1969.
2. Date of erection: 1849 (main mill).
3. Architect: Unknown.
4. Builder, suppliers: Unknown.

5. Original plan and construction: The original building was five stories high with a gable roof and continuous clerestory windows. The plan was rectangular 256' x 50' with a central entrance and stair tower on the main elevation (northwest). The exterior walls were granite, load-bearing; and the interior framing was slow-burning timber construction.
6. Alterations and additions: Tower roof, c. 1853. Stone picker house, south end of main mill. A three story plus basement addition done probably quite soon after the original mill was built. Five story addition northeast corner (96' x 46'), 1893. A number of other additions and outbuildings were built at various times from the mid-19th century onward. Original gable roof and dormer windows removed and replaced by shallow gable roof over clerestory windows between 1892 and 1898.

B. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

City of Woonsocket, records of deeds; sale by Clinton Mfg. Co. to B. B. & R. Knight; also prior and subsequent property transfers.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Associated Mutual Insurance Co. (Factory Mutuals).

Clinton Mfg. Co., Woonsocket, R. I. Serial No. 6301, Index No. 15060. Plan and isometric drawing dated March 25, 1902. Photocopy in HABS Photo-Data Book.

Ballou's Pictorial Drawing Room Companion. Vol. 9, No. 7, August 18, 1855. p. 105 (woodcut of mill).

Bayles, Richard M. History of Providence County Rhode Island. New York: 1891. (2 Vols.). Vol. II, p. 310.

Everts and Richard's Atlas of Providence County Rhode Island. Philadelphia: 1895. p. 204 (advertisement); pl. 156.

Gelard, James. Handbook on Cotton Manufacture. New York: 1867. (Engraving of mill.)

Greene, Welcome Arnold. 250 Years of the Providence Plantations. Providence: 1886.

Knight, B. B. & R. Fruit of the Loom Muslin and Other High Quality Fabrics. Providence: c. 1920.

Sanborn and Perris Map Co., New York. Atlas of Woonsocket,
R. I. (1911 with later corrections).

Webb's New England Railway and Manufacturers' Gazetteer.
Providence: 1869. p. 473.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Clinton Mill is typical of the large stone cotton textile mills of Rhode Island of the mid-19th century. It was built in 1849 and has a unique tower roof dating from the early 1850's.
2. Condition of fabric: Poor.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: 256' x 50'; thirty-one (31) bays, three (3) aisles; four (4) stories plus attic and basement; rectangular in shape.
2. Foundations: Stone.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: Load-bearing stone masonry, uncoursed, ochre colored granite. Lintels and quoins are pitch-faced granite.
4. Structural system, framing: Slow-burning timber construction.
5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads: None.
6. Chimneys: None.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Wood frame in masonry openings. Wood panelled doors with lights. One pair on each floor of stair tower for machinery service.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Wood frames in masonry openings. Wood double-hung sash, 6/6.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Shallow gable over clerestory windows. The roof pitch is steeper from the clerestory window sills to the eaves thus giving the general impression of a gambrel roof.

- b. Cornice, eaves: Brick cornice.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: Central stair tower (north-west elevation) has a decorative curvilinear mansard, two stage roof dating from the early 1850's. Water closet tower, southeast elevation.

C. Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor plans: Rectangular, two (2) rows of interior columns divide interior into three aisles. There are no significant interior partitions.
- 2. Stairways: One central stair tower (northwest elevation).
- 3. Flooring: Wood plank, mill (slow-burning) construction.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls: plaster over stone. Ceilings: One inch (1") plaster on structural plank.
- 5. Doorways and doors: None.
- 6. Special decorative features: None.
- 7. Notable hardware: None.
- 8. Mechanical equipment: Electric: recent. Heating: steam pipes (exposed) mounted to underside of wood beams.

D. Site and Surroundings:

- 1. General setting and orientation: The building is located on the west bank of the Blackstone River. The site is bounded on the south by railroad tracks and a railroad bridge, and on the west by Clinton Street. The site is relatively level, rising slightly to the south. (The mill was demolished in June 1969.)
- 2. Landscaping: An open canal (now covered) that brought water to the head race at the north-northwest portion of the mill runs between the northwest elevation of the main building and Clinton Street. It was covered after 1911, exact date uncertain (c. 1950?).

Prepared by Robert M. Vogel and
Ted Sande
National Park Service
September 2, 1968;
August 1971

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This building was recorded as part of the New England Textile Mill Survey II; which was sponsored by the Historic American Buildings Survey of the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation of the National Park Service, and the Smithsonian Institution. The project was assisted by the Merrimack Valley Textile Museum, North Andover, Mass.; the Fall River Historical Society; and the Bristol Community College, Fall River, Mass. It was the second of two summer surveys whose purpose was to record representative examples of the buildings of the New England textile industry.

The field work, historical research and record drawings were done in the summer of 1968 under the direction of Robert M. Vogel (Curator of Mechanical and Civil Engineering, Museum of History and Technology, Smithsonian Institution), Project Director; Professor Melvin M. Rotsch (Architect, Texas A & M University), Project Supervisor; and David L. Bouse (University of Nebraska), Peter S. Conrad (Yale University), Eric N. DeLony (Ohio State University), and Dennis W. Jacobs (University of Kansas), Student Assistant Architects.

Historic documentation and editing of the project data were done in the summer of 1971 by Ted Sande (Architect, University of Pennsylvania), under the auspices of the Historic American Engineering Record of the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation of the National Park Service.